

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

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BEIJING TODAY

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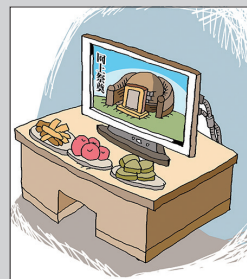
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Property developers are working to keep golf a rich man's game. **Page 4**



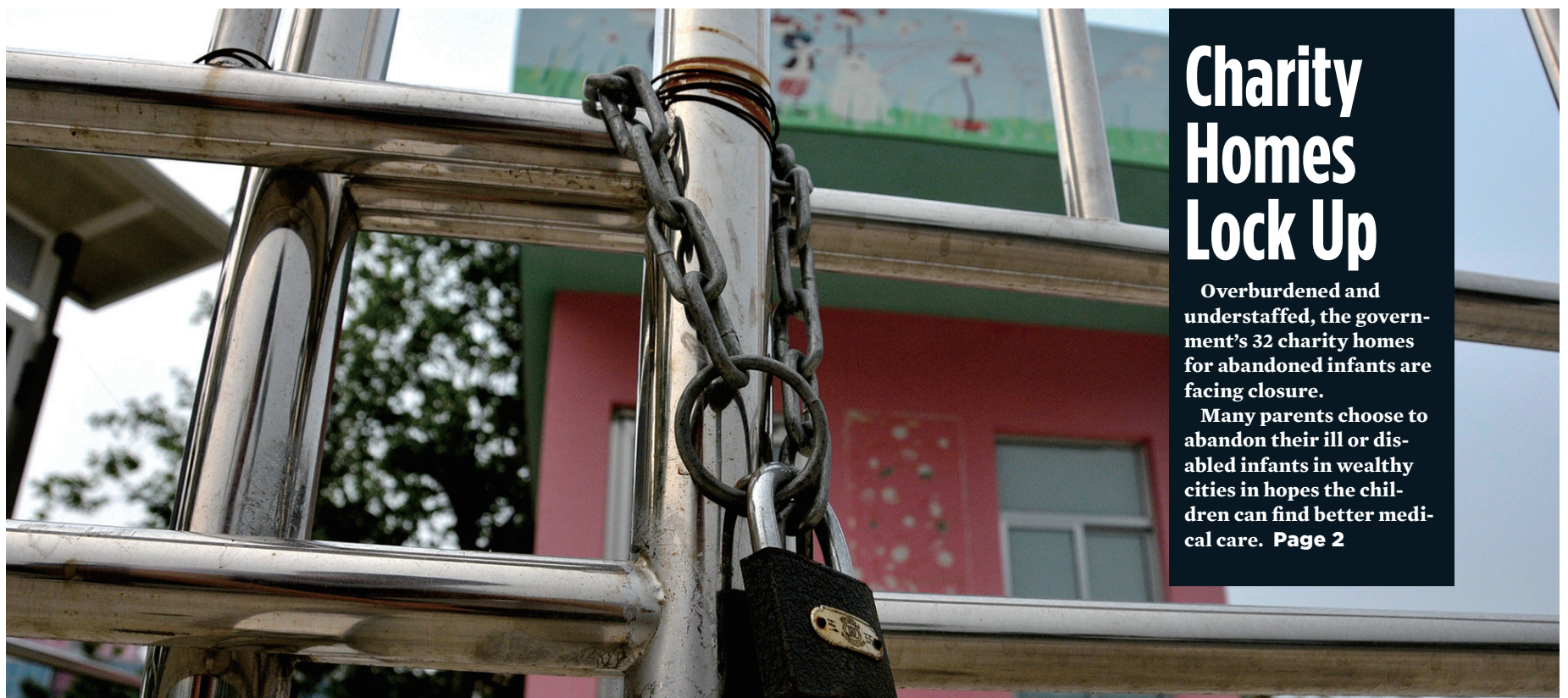
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The somber Qingming Festival has become surprisingly profitable holiday. **Page 5**



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Charity Homes Lock Up

Overburdened and understaffed, the government's 32 charity homes for abandoned infants are facing closure.

Many parents choose to abandon their ill or disabled infants in wealthy cities in hopes the children can find better medical care. **Page 2**

High-Speed Rails Add Female Compartments

BY LYNNE WANG

Eight rail lines between Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are creating special compartments for single female passengers to spare them the potential embarrassment and danger of sharing a closed sleeper room with unfamiliar males.

"When passengers buy tickets, the system will automatically identify their gender based on their ID number and allocate seats in the special compartments to females who are traveling

alone," said a spokesman for Railway Interests.

For female commuters, the upcoming policy may significantly improve their riding experience and sense of security.

"I commute a lot because of my work, and sleeper trains are always my first choice. But I'm often afraid of being assigned a sleeper compartment with three unfamiliar men. I always ask the conductor to help me transfer to another sleeper when it happens," said

Bai Peixin, an office worker in Beijing.

It is not the first time that China's railway system has created female-only compartments.

In 2006, Trains Z6 and Z22 on the Beijing-Shanghai line reserved two compartments for female passengers each day. Though many media reports were enthusiastic about the news, sales halted due to the lack of promotion, low public awareness and disappointing occupancy rates. ■

CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
3,957.53	▼ 37.28 (0.93%)	+27.36%

SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
13,796.73	▼ 44.99 (0.33%)	+25.30%

HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
26,944.39	▲ 707.53 (2.7%)	+14.69%

Accurate to market close on April 9, 2015





Jobs Stats Show Civil Service Work Losing Its Shine

BY YANG XIN

The “iron rice bowl” of civil service is losing its appeal as corruption wars and political battles ebb away at the perks and benefits to which Chinese officials have become accustomed.

Since the job-hunting season opened in February, more than 10,000 government officials have abandoned their posts for private-sector jobs. The rush marks a 34 percent increase from 2011, according to the Beijing-based employment website Zhaopin.com.

The trend is not limited to existing government workers: fewer graduates have signed up to sit the 2015 Civil Service Exam than any year since 2009 even as the test opens the door to more positions.

Huang Ruoshan, a career consultant at Zhaopin.com, said officials have been among the site's top job seekers this year. “The ongoing anti-corruption campaign has left many mid-level officials worried about their careers.”

Feng Lijuan, an analyst at 51job.com, another employment website, said salary transparency and performance appraisals are crushing the career prospects of many Chinese public servants. Pension reforms that might eat away at their retirement are another concern.

Ren Ming, vice president of a prefecture-level court, said he could earn 10 times his current salary if he quit to practice private law. He said both friends and family opposed his past plans to quit; but this year, only one friend voiced his objection.

With 10-hour workdays and weekends, Ren's job as a government official offered no advantages over being a local lawyer whether comparing by salary or career advancement opportunities, he said.

The judicial system reflects one of the government's most critical areas of brain drain. The Supreme People's Court of Beijing said during the 2014 People's Political Consultative Congress that more than 500 court workers resigned in the last five years.

Civil servants who hold low positions face the most problems when they choose to abandon their office, said Li Zhi, the leader of a QQ group for officials who are considering a switch to the private sector.

“Many of our group members are confused about what they can do in the private sector,” Li said. “Without professional skills in specific fields, most of them don't have a good option outside the public system.”

“Actually, it's a good thing that the overall number of applicants for civil service jobs is on the decline. This isn't something that should surprise anyone,” said Professor Zhou Zhiren from Peking University's School of Management. “It's only when a society lacks other opportunities that its talented people opt for government work.”

“This trend gives people freedom to choose their own career paths,” said Zhuang Deshui, vice director of Research Centre for Anti-Corruption Studies at Peking University.

Zhuang said government documents and policies like the “eight rules” are not the main cause of staff shrink. “After years of revolution, we finally have a mature market order and management method. Ordinary civil servants without specialties or financial support can flop when they face the business world.”

But to keep an essential number of civil servants, the government will have to find a way to improve its salary system and offer proper incentives.

“The ones who choose to stay in their position need to be encouraged and given more material or spiritual benefits,” Zhuang said. ■

Charity Homes Buckle Under the Pressure of Abandoned Infants

BY YANG XIN



The national government created a network of charity homes to receive abandoned children in 2011. In the last four years, it has expanded to include 32 homes in 16 provinces and cities.

Today, the overburdened and understaffed centers are facing closure and their 1,400 infants have nowhere to go.

Homes in Guangzhou, Jinan and Xiamen have already been closed or forced to suspend operations. In Quzhou, Zhejiang province, one charity home has closed its doors to weekend access and refuses to accept infants abandoned by families outside the local community.

In its report on the centers, the China Philanthropy Research Institute at Beijing Normal University said charity homes in Shijiazhuang, Nanjing and Guangzhou were saddled with more than 100 abandoned infants within months of opening. In Nanjing, more than 140 abandoned were

left at the shelter during the first three months of operation.

But homes for abandoned children in Changde, Tongren, Taiyuan and Guiyang have had comparatively stable operation. The institute said the cities' reduced demand might be attributed to their remote locations.

Tong Xiaojun, a professor at China Youth University of Political Studies, said the management of the abandonment centers lacks standardization.

“The babies people choose to abandon are usually those born with congenital diseases or disabilities. Parents probably abandon them in the big city hoping they will have better access to medical care,” Tong said.

Gao Huajun, vice dean of the China Philanthropy Research Institute, said creating more charity homes might help relieve pressure in the big cities. ■

Gov Pushes Back Retirement Age for Female Cadres

BY DIAO DIAO

Female cadres employed above the deputy level in Party and government bodies will have to wait an extra five years to retire, according to a new notice from the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee and Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

The new retirement age of 60 also applies to female administrators and senior staff in similar agencies.

Changes to the retirement age of female cadres have been rumored for the past several months. Although national rules existed, many cities took advantage of holes in the regulations to set their own retirement criteria.

The new notice closes these holes.

However, it also allows the cadres listed above to apply for early retirement according to personal need. Females aged 55 or older may apply for early retirement, and some senior technical staff can delay retirement if needed.

China's first retirement standard was issued in 1953. It allowed male workers aged 60 who have more than 25 years of work experience to retire; females aged 50 with more than 20 years of work experience were allowed to retire as well.

Regulations related to retirement were revised several times, with the last revision in 1978 pegging the retirement ages to 60 and 55 for male and female cadres and 60 and 50 for male and female workers.

Yin Weimin, minister of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, said China is facing an imbalance in its pension system due to a rapidly aging population.

China will practice a progressive delay of retirement in the coming two years, Yin said.

“People aged 60 or older account for 15 percent of China's population,” Yin said. “That number will climb to nearly 20 percent by 2020 and 39 percent by 2050 as the labor pool shrinks.”

A progressive delay of retirement age will help protect the labor force's structure, Yin said. ■



Photos by CFP & 21cn.com



5-Year-Old Killed in Teen's Mistaken Poisoning Attempt

BY LYNNE WANG

The case of a 19-year-old student whose alleged attempt to poison his grandmother instead killed a 5-year-old boy is now being heard by the People's Court of Haidian. The man, who faces charges of negligent homicide and remains identified only by the surname Pan, has been jailed in Haidian since the child's death in January 2014.

At the hearing on April 2, police alleged that Pan intended to poison his step-grandmother by lacing her favorite almond juice with sodium nitrite, a preservative that is poisonous in large doses.

Haidian Police became involved when a husband and wife who manage a garbage station found their son dead after drinking a carton of almond juice on January 6, 2014. Police found small puncture marks on the surface of the package and high concentrations of sodium

nitrate inside.

"The drink was given to us by a garbage picker named Li on January 5. We've known each other for several years," the boy's mother said in a deposition.

But Li said she was not the one who poisoned the drink. Footage obtained from police surveillance cameras in the neighborhood showed a middle-aged woman tossing a box of almond juice into a garbage can before Li could load it into her cart.

"I just found it. I had no idea there was anything wrong with the drink. I decided to pass it on to the owners of the garbage station where I sell my waste," Li said.

Police soon targeted Pan, the son of the woman who threw out the poisoned juice, as their main suspect. Police said Pan planned to use the

drink to poison his step-grandmother so he could inherit his grandfather's apartment.

Born in 1995 in Beijing, Pan lived with his grandparents and disabled parents in a 60-square-meter apartment on Fuxing Road since childhood. The unit was so small that Pan and his parents had to live in an 8-square-meter section and share one bed until he was 18 years old.

"The crowded home made me feel embarrassed and ashamed. I've never invited any of my friends to come visit," Pan said.

The embarrassment became something dangerous once Pan heard his grandmother ask his father to move out.

"My dad is an auto mechanic and my mom is unemployed. They could never afford an apartment with their low wages. I was afraid my step-grandmother would occupy the apartment by herself since she doesn't care about us. After all, she's not my biological grandmother," Pan said.

Police said Pan purchased the almond drink, his step-grandmother's favorite, in July 2013 and obtained 500 grams of sodium nitrate from a chemical firm.

It takes about 4.6 grams of sodium nitrate to kill a 65-kilogram adult according to the chemical's established lethal dose.

After injecting the sodium nitrite into each carton, Pan gave the drinks to his grandmother, police said. When the woman came down with symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea, she gave the drinks back to Pan and complained about their "weird taste."

Pan attempted to destroy the drinks in secret by pouring them down the family's toilet. However, after flushing two bottles per day, he eventually tired of the process and asked his mom to throw out the rest of the case saying "the drinks are spoiled," police said.

"I gave up my plan to murder my grandmother after she returned the drinks to me. There are so many stories about property disputes in the media. All I ever wanted was my own room," Pan told the court. ■



Beijing Taxi Driver Keeps iPhone, Snaps Selfies

A Beijing taxi driver who decided to help himself to a passenger's forgotten iPhone is being forced to return the mobile device after uploading selfies to the owner's cloud account.

The owner, a woman from Shandong province surnamed Li, said she forgot the phone in the taxi's back seat on January 7. She had given up hope of recovering the device until new pictures began appearing in her iCloud stream.

One of the pictures clearly showed the driver with his taxi service card.

(Tencent News)

Southern Charmer Slaps Date for Being Ugly

Police in Shenhui, Fujian province responded to a call from a woman who was slapped and abandoned by her date on March 24.

The woman, a 21-year-old garment factory worker surnamed Lin, had gone to meet a man she found using WeChat Shake. Unfortunately, the digitally altered photos she sent "Hai" gave him some unrealistic expectations.

When the two met up, Hai told Lin that she looked more like a hillbilly than the "goddess" of her photos. He slapped her and walked away when she told him he didn't look any better.

Police identified Hai as a tailor in the same factory. He was ordered to apologize and pay 200 yuan as compensation for the assault.

(Tencent News)

Anhui Gangs Take Rivalry into Shanghai Bar

Two rival gangs from Anhui province battled it out with machetes and knives in a Shanghai bar named "Baby Love" on March 29. The fight left two people dead and five injured.

Pudong Police arrested more than 10 suspects and witnesses reported seeing blood splatters running from the club's carpet out to the street.

Street vendors who were working nearby said more than 20 people were involved in the fight.

(ThePaper.cn)

IKEA Bans Customers from Sleeping on Furniture

IKEA China wants customers to know that its showrooms are for sales, not sleeping. In spite of a store policy that bans naps, the city's elders and children still consider IKEA the perfect place for a snooze.

More than half the beds and sofas at the IKEA store in Xihongmen, Beijing were occupied by sleepers according to a report by the *Beijing Youth Daily*. Many sleepers had their shoes off and were under the covers.

The paper quoted a middle-aged woman as saying she thought IKEA's beds were especially comfortable and that she and her friends often went to the store for their afternoon nap.

IKEA staff said that although the store prohibits sleeping on its furniture, most of the nappers are children or elderly people who refused to comply.

(Beijing Youth Daily)

Electric Cars Exempt from Beijing's Plate Limits

BY DIAO DIAO

The municipal government is resuming its practice of limiting which cars may drive on city streets during weekdays from tomorrow. The restrictions will remain in effect through April 10, 2016.

Electric cars that only rely on chargeable batteries and electric motors will be exempt from the new restrictions.

Road safety laws and Beijing air pollution ordinances require government cars to stay off the road one day each weekday. Private vehicles are limited according to the final digit of their license plate. Each day, two digits are selected for prohibition.

Restricted hours run from 7 am to 8 pm every day and include the entire area within Fifth Ring Road. Cars are not limited on weekends.

Last week's announcement marks the first time electric cars have been freed

from all regulations – a privilege previously enjoyed only by police cars, ambulances, utility trucks, taxis and buses.

To further encourage clean energy vehicles, the government is renewing its preferential policies for Beijingers who purchase electric cars.

Traffic officials said they would seed the lottery system, which limits license plates and car purchases, with an additional 10,000 numbers reserved for new energy vehicles.

The national and municipal governments are also offering financial subsidies to people who purchase electric cars. Last year, drivers could get 114,000 yuan from both the national and Beijing governments: this year's subsidy has shrunk to 108,000 yuan, but the government is



Photos by CFP & dfic.com

canceling sales tax on electric vehicles.

Although government policy is clearly intended to promote electric car ownership, access to charging stations remains a problem for Beijing's electric car owners. ■



Chinese Golf Built for Face, Not for Fun

BY LYNNE WANG

The National Development and Reform Commission ordered the immediate closure of 66 golf courses across the country for violating its restrictions on land use and construction on March 30.

In some ways, the order is an admission of the failure of its 10-year moratorium on course construction.

The State Council banned golf projects in 2004 and called on lower levels of government to sweep out illegal courses and prohibit new construction. It reiterated that prohibition 11 times during the last decade.

During the same period, the number of golf courses on the Chinese mainland surged from 178 in 2004 to 528 in 2013, according to a study by the Golf Education and Research Center of Beijing Forestry University. Developers built more than 200 golf courses and driving ranges in the capital alone.

But in spite of that amazing expansion, industry analysts say that less than a third of the courses turn a profit. The lack of government support and China's shrinking community of golfers make such a dramatic expansion all the more puzzling.

Built for Face

According to the 2014 Report on the Golf Industry compiled by Forward Golf, an independent consultancy, China's golf industry was expanding at a rate of less than 5 percent per year prior



China's golf courses have become the meeting point of political power and money.

to 2003. After the ban it began growing at 10.3 percent per year.

"Anyone with a head for numbers can spot that the golf industry boom coincides with the Chinese real estate boom," said Zhang Debi, a reporter for Tencent News.

But the overlap is no mere coin-

cidence. In its report, Forward Golf said more than 70 percent of the golf courses in eleven cities were tied to real estate projects.

In the provinces of Yunnan and Hainan, that correlation swelled to 90 percent and 83 percent. In Shanghai, more than 73 percent of the city's golf courses were built by or had a partnership with a real estate developer.

"Rolling golf courses into real estate projects is how Chinese golf makes money. No one cares whether anyone plays because the nearby real estate projects already allow the golf operators and real estate developers to make quick money," said the manager of a golf club in Shanghai who would only speak on conditions of anonymity.

"In China, just having a golf course nearby causes housing prices to increase by at least 25 percent," said David Schreiner, an industry observer.

At a 240-hectare course in Kunming, 60 hectares are used for the course itself, leaving room for 300 villas measuring 300 square meters each. At a sale price of 20,000 yuan per square meter, the golf operators and real estate developers can take in as much as 1.8 billion yuan.

The ban on new golf projects should make such profits a mere dream: with the permission and involvement of local government officials it becomes reality.

"Construction of new golf projects should require the approval of both

the National Development and Reform Commission and the State Council," said Liu Shouren, executive dean of the Golf Rules and Culture Research Center at China University of Politics and Law. "But course operators regularly bypass the eyes of the central government by branding their golf courses as sports parks, ecological gardens and tourist resorts."

Such projects only require the approval of the local or county-level government, Liu said.

It's a financial win for all the involved parties.

"The golf operators and real estate developers get a steep discount on the land price because of preferential pricing for 'agricultural projects,'" the *Economic Information Daily* wrote in an editorial.

"For local officials, career advancement is tied to their ability to boost the local GDP," it said.

"Illegal golf projects significantly boost tax income, employment and local tourism – all of which ensure personal promotion," it said.

Ecology and Corruption

Golf arrived in China with the economic reforms of the 1980s.

While public golf courses have kept the sport accessible to the masses in the Western world, China latched onto the movie image of golf as a "rich man's game" and made it a symbol of status.

And where there is status, there is face.

In order to further enhance the privileged status of golf in China, courses have grown increasingly large. The majority of Chinese golf courses cover more than 80 hectares.

But such sprawling courses are often catastrophic for China, a comparatively arid country that has to feed a seventh of the world's mouths.

"The annual water consumption for an 18-hole course totals 4 million tons. In order to slash costs, many of golf course operators drill into the wells of nearby villages to steal their water," said a golf course manager in Beijing who would only speak on conditions of anonymity.

Pollution is another concern.

"An 80-hectare golf course will use 13 tons of insecticide, bactericide and other chemicals each month. Some of this absorbed by the grass, but the rest is left to flow into nearby reservoirs and rivers," said Yi Chengqing, an ecologist at the China Academy of Sciences.

Finding a way to separate the sport of golf from the industry's reputation for ecological devastation and corrupt practices is one of the biggest questions facing industry insiders. It may also be one of the concerns reflected by the central government's crackdown.

"Golf is a sport that involves culture and etiquette. I don't know why it has turned so dark in China," said Wu Yongzhi, a golfer in Beijing. "I would like to see the government find a way to bring the sport back to its original purpose with better management."

"Finding a way to make the sport sustainable is what China's authorities should focus on. They need to open public golf courses and give the public a chance to experience the fun of this sport," said Gary Player, a golf legend and course designer. ■

Qingming Traditions Bring Economic Boom

BY WANG LINGXIAO

COST		RETAIL	
1元	10元	5元	金山银山德好花
0.1元	1元	1元	
0.5元	30元	30元	
1.5元	30元	30元	
5元	100元	100元	

Photo by Su Derui

Each Qingming Festival, China's paper companies turn the year's most desirable products into burnable offerings with staggering profit margins.

The Qingming Festival is one of China's most important traditions with a history stretching back more than 2,500 years. The festival's modern observation involves burning paper offerings to whisk useful objects away to the spirit world.

But where face, trends and culture intersect, profits are to be found.

China's growing consumer market has led paper companies throughout East Asia to offer their own take on modern products for the ancient tradition. The phenomenon of modern jets, credit cards, smartphones, homes and luxury goods being recreated in paper has caught the attention of many international observers.

For the more digitally minded worshippers, IT startups are offering virtual cemeteries complete with video memorials and clickable incense sticks.

Traditional Sacrifice

Even on more conservative items such as paper money, incense and candles, the profits generated during the Qingming Festival can be huge.

Bundles of fake bank notes that cost less than 1 yuan to make sell for 5 yuan or more; paper illustrations of cars and homes that cost 0.12 yuan to make sell for 1 yuan.

But cash can't satisfy the modern ghost's craving for bling.

Fashionable handbags, luxury villas, branded laptops and McDonald's value meals appear cast in paper alongside more valuable status symbols such as academic degrees, foreign passports and American green cards. The profits for these new products can be staggeringly high compared to traditional paper offerings with paper homes selling for more than 20 times what they cost to produce.

"According to our survey, families burned more than 130 tons of paper during last year's sacrificial offerings. Traditional paper money accounted for only 70 tons," said Liu Yunsheng, secretary of the Funeral Association of Shijiazhuang, Hebei province.

"Even though it's superstitious and the items are quite expensive, we still bought a paper car for my dead father. He never got to drive one during his life," said Wang Hexiang, a shopper in Henan province.

But environment concerns have some families shying away from burning paper.

"Actually, overall sales are down this year. We usually sell through more than 10 boxes of paper goods before Qingming. This year we've only sold about 5 during the same period," said a vendor surnamed Zhu. "While they may be more profitable, there are still fewer fashion items sold than traditional paper money."

"Burning paper is just a ritual to remember the dead. Spending more or burning more doesn't really make you feel any better. I'm more concerned about the fires and the resulting spike in air pollution," said a Beijinger surnamed Wang.

Many families opted to buy flowers or fruits to offer at their relatives' graves. "We sold 300 to 500 chrysanthemum branches each day. The demand pushed the price of flowers up about 25 percent this year," said a Beijing florist surnamed Li.

Online Services

While many worshippers use the Internet to buy their sacrificial goods, others use it to book memorial services.

Many paid websites allow users to create a virtual memorial for their dead relative with a biography, photos and video content. Users can click the screen to burn incense, kowtow, offer a sacrifice or play music; visitors can leave messages on the virtual tombs.

But many say the virtual experience loses something important: Qingming's solemn nature. The mouse and screen are a poor replacement for presenting a bouquet in front of a family member's tomb.

Nevertheless, Peng Hengli, director of the Folklore Research Institution at Henan University, said online memorial services could become a new trend. More than 200,000 users connected to Tsingming.com to register for virtual tomb sweeping services on April 5.

"Fifteen years ago, everyone said the same thing about online shopping," Peng said. "If users decide the virtual tombs have the same cultural meaning as the real thing, then it will become accepted as a valid."

In Hangzhou, some gravestones are sold with QR codes that visitors can scan to learn about the life of the person buried below.

For those unable to return to their hometowns during the break but still put off by virtual memorials, Taobao merchants sold remote tomb sweeping services that included crying, kowtowing and offering cigarettes and wine to the dead. Costs ranged up to 1,000 yuan depending on the location.

Of course, such services may be an even harder sell. Chinese tradition looks poorly on people who ask others to help sweep the family tomb: only 15 such deals were settled before the holiday. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)

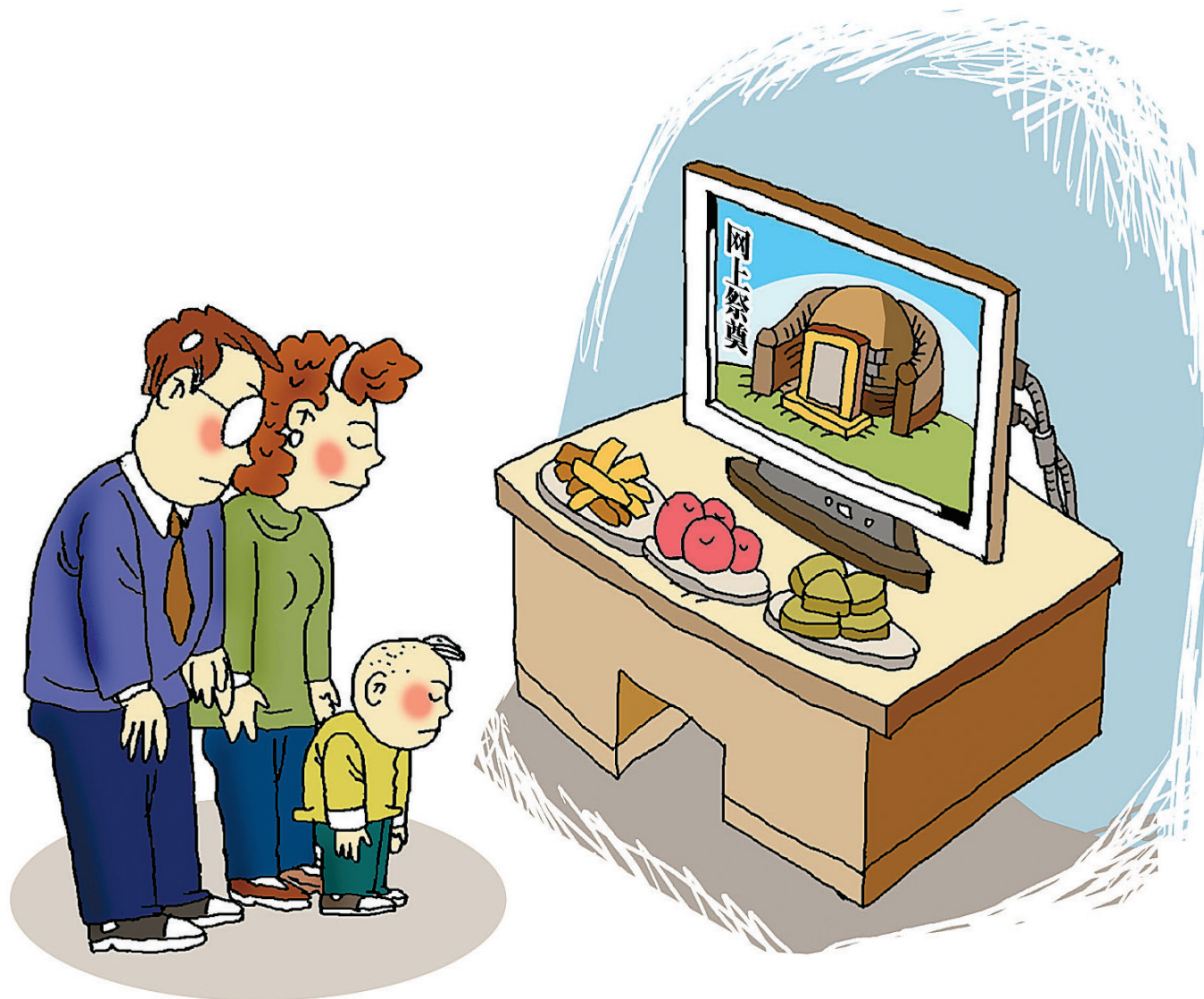


Photo by CFP



Photo by Google

Tough Job Market Directs Grads to be Their Own Boss

BY YANG XIN

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security estimates that 7.49 million college students will enter the job market after graduating this summer, that may make 2015 the toughest year yet for young jobseekers.

Faced with stiff competition in the

job market, more and more graduates are choosing self-employment or "freelancing" off the books.

But while these unregistered workers have a direction and some income, their irregular status keeps them off the government's database of working class citizens.

Job Prospects

Over the past two years, the 26-year-old young entrepreneur Chen Zixin has built up an online business to sell homemade healthcare foods over WeChat. The business can bring in as much as 30,000 yuan per month.

"I work 16 hours a day during the busiest times," Chen said. "But I prefer it to office work because I decide when to start the work day. The hours are flexible and up to me."

Chen is among an increasing number of college graduates who have chosen to freelance or start their own small businesses rather than compete with millions of others for a job.

According to a survey by Xi'an Jiaotong University, 2.62 percent of its graduates chose self-employment in 2013. The proportion almost tripled to 6.67 percent in 2014.

"The iron rice bowl is no longer attractive to graduates, especially those who grew up in the 1990s. They want jobs with flexible work time and that offer more in the way of options than stability," said Jiang Yingjin, a teacher at Hunan University of Commerce.

Diversifying market demand has also accelerated the rise of self-employed workers.

A spokesman for Ningbo Human Resource Service Center said many enterprises are outsourcing their businesses to freelancers to slash labor costs. Online-to-offline business models are perfect channels through which they can sift through freelancers and find a worker who matches their budget.

But not all self-employed workers are as fortunate as Chen. Most aspiring business owners start with an online store, but few see anything more than sporadic income and stumbling sales.

Potential Threats

While unregistered employment should be considered a supplement to existing employment modes, its extreme risks can't be ignored.

"Self-employed people are left to struggle alone and don't enjoy support from either employers or the government," said Li Bin, a professor of sociology at Central South University. "Competition is especially fierce in this area, and self-employed people are particularly vulnerable when it comes to weathering risks."

"When graduates receive their diplomas, they are granted the right to be part of our labor force. They should always sign a labor contract with their employer, regardless of how many hours they work," said Zhao Lianhui, an analyst at the Labor and Social Security Research Institute of China University of Political Science and Law.

"Even if they work as freelancers they should not ignore the need to sign labor contracts with their temporary employers. These documents are related to the calculation of their working age and pension insurance," Zhao said.

Yang Lixiong, vice dean of the China Social Security Research Center at Renmin University of China, said young self-employed people haven't recognized the importance of participating in social insurance.

"One day, they will all retire and have to live on the healthcare and pension programs of the government," Yang said.

While self-employment may relieve graduates' immediate employment pressure, the long-term safety and stability of these workers remains up in the air. ■



Photo by Sina

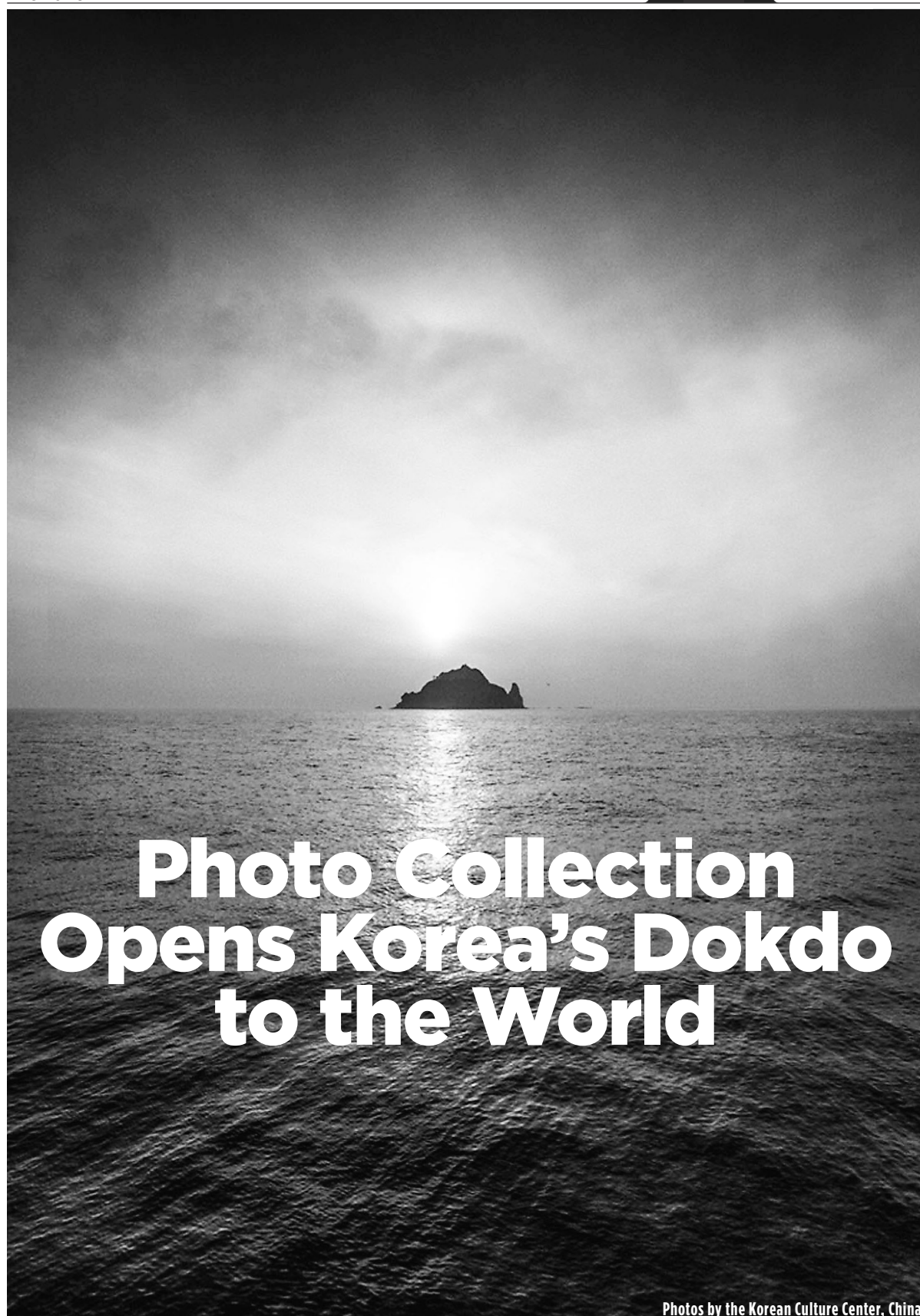


Photo Collection Opens Korea's Dokdo to the World

Photos by the Korean Culture Center, China



BY YANG XIN

The Loneliest Island In Korea, a collection of photos featuring South Korea's easternmost Dokdo islets, is going on display next week in Beijing after debuting in Seoul in July 2014.

The collection is the work of South Korean photographer Kim Jung Man, best known for his 30-year career as a top photographer in Korea's fashion, advertising and film industries.

But for this project, Kim turned away from his commercial ventures in 2012 to focus his lens on feelings of isolation.

Jointly organized by the Northeast Asian History Foundation (NAHF), a think tank funded by South Korea's foreign ministry, and the Korean Cultural Center in Beijing, the Dokdo photos are part of a project to rediscover Korea.

Kim captured more than 20,000 photos of the islets and their unique landscapes during the two-year project. NAHF officials praised Kim's perspective, saying the 1,000 faces he captured might one day make Dokdo a national attraction.

"The word that popped into my mind after my last shooting on Dokdo was 'my mother's breast.' Whenever I am in grief, it's my mother's breast where I can rest. Dokdo was like that to me," Kim said.

The Dokdo photo exhibit is aimed at raising awareness about the islets, said Kim Hak Joon, president of the NAHF.

"Although the photos cost Kim two long years of hard work, he decided to donate them stating that they belong to the nation, not to him," Kim Hak Joon said.

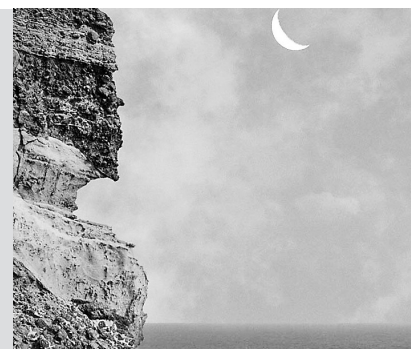
More than 40 Koreans live on the Dokdo islets in addition to 20 regular tourists who visit every year.

Korean Culture Center

⌚ Through April 17

📍 1 Guanghua Xi Li, Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang

💎 Free



Croisements Festival Kicks Off Sino-French Exchange

BY YANG XIN

The 2015 Festival Croisements, a three-month display of French culture, opens today. The multi-disciplinary performances and exhibitions are a yearly doorway for cultural exchange between China and France.

The Institut Francaise announced this year's event to the public in February during its New Year's preview at the old Sino-French University. Croisements has been held in China since 2006, when the Annees Croisees France-China Festival ended.

While other cultural events court existing art and culture fans, Croisements brings French culture directly into the lives of residents of China's top-tier cities.

With more than 100 programs and 400 events taking place in 30 cities, Croisements offers exceptional diversity. For its 10th anniversary, the festival is taking the public on a voyage of discovery to surprising, intense, popular and prestigious projects. The festival also coincides with the celebration of a 30-year collaboration between the Chinese

National Ballet and the Ballet of Paris Opera.

This year's Croisements highlights creative youths in the French dance and music scenes and promotes the exploration of unknown territories and hybrid art forms.

Organizers said they hope the audience will play a role in preventing the stagnation of France's cultural heritage by revisiting French cultural heritage.

To help blow out the festival's 10 candles and celebrate the program, organizers have enlisted 10 public figures from the Chinese cultural world. Participants include pianist Lang Lang, film director Feng Xiaogang, theatre director Meng Jinghui, musician Shen Lihui and painter Zeng Fanzhi.

This year's Croisements logo reflects the theme of creative thought. It combines icons of French culture with Peking opera masks to fuse the cultural traditions of the two countries.

Festival Croisements is organized by the French Embassy, Institut Francaise, Alliance Francaise and Faguo Wenhua. ■



DENMARK
Top ranking for the cost-benefit ratio of the school system
The country is among global top 3 for work balance
Insider tip: Denmark ranks first in family well-being and beats Sweden by two positions

NEW ZEALAND
New Zealanders are amongst the most welcoming people worldwide
Three in four find it easy to settle down in the isolated country
The place to go for people who are looking for peace and quiet in the world

MEXICO
Has the friendliest people in the world
Eight out of ten foreigners feel right at home in Mexico
Almost half of the people relocating to Mexico would like to stay there forever

InterNations Expat Insider 2014 Delves into Expat Living

Expat Insider 2014, an investigation into the lives and experiences of 14,000 expatriates from 165 nations living in 169 countries, is InterNations' biggest expat survey yet.

Its report on the survey offers insight into expats' quality of life abroad, ease of settling in, working abroad, family life, personal finances, cost of living, gender, age and nationality. It also ranks countries from the most to the least popular expat destinations using a wide range of criteria, as indicated by the name of each ranking.

The General Quality of Life Index, the Ease of Settling in Index, the Working Abroad Index, the Family Life Index and the Personal Finance Index all contributed to the overall ranking of more than 60 countries.

In 2014, the Top 10 expat destinations were Ecuador, Luxembourg, Mexico, Switzerland, the US, Singapore, Spain, Philippines, Australia and Hong Kong.

As many as 14 percent of the world's expats leave their home country for love, according to the survey; 64 percent of these romantics are female.

In addition, this survey identifies Greece, Chile, Argentina, Mexico and the Philippines as the world's best places for romance.

These are the destinations with the highest percentages of expatriates who either met their partner in their country of residence or whose partner comes from that country. In Philippines, 66 percent of all expats are in a relationship with a local resident. Argentina (55 percent), Chile (54 percent), Mexico (54 percent) and Greece (53 percent) show results that lie far above

the global average of about one third.

Philippines also boasts the happiest expat couples: about 56 percent of its expatriates reported being completely satisfied with their relationship, as compared to the global average of 43 percent. The country ranks fifth in terms of ease of settling in.

The InterNations Expat Insider 2014 shows that four in five expatriates met their partner before they moved abroad. Of this number almost half of the couples moved together, while in 17 percent of the cases the partner already lived in the new country of residence.

One in 10 expats is a traveling spouse who relocated for their partner's job or education; 86 percent of those spouses are women. On the other hand, 20 percent of the male expatriates in a relationship have a partner still living in another country and are therefore more likely to maintain a long-distance relationship.

After the traveling spouse, almost 60 percent of globetrotting expats reported that enjoying an extended vacation would make them more likely to move abroad together with their partner. Long-distance relationships are more common among students (37 percent) and people who move abroad for their career (35 percent).

The InterNations Expat Insider 2014 aims to find out how satisfied these respondents are with all these different aspects of relocation and expatriate life.

InterNations is the first international community for people living and working abroad. It is the biggest expatriate network in the world with more than 1 million expats and global minds helping members to meet, learn about their new environment and exchange expat-specific tips and advice in the InterNations forum and discussion group. ■

(By Shu Pengqian)

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